

CAREER FOCUS

The Pygmalion Effect—it's easy, it works wonders, and it's free!

BY MASTER SGT. DAVID HALVORSON
TEAM KIRTLAND
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All it takes is really believing. Supervisors can create better employees just by believing in them! This is even truer when working with underachievers.

Studies have shown that if you tell a grammar school classroom teacher that a child is bright, the teacher will be more supportive, teach more difficult material, allow more time to answer questions and provide more feedback to that child. The child receiving this attention (and basking in the teacher's belief) learns more and also performs better in school.

It doesn't matter if the child is actually bright. All that matters is that the teacher believes in the child. Fortunately, this is also true of managers and workers.

This uniquely human phenomenon is known as the Pygmalion Effect. The term, taken from a character in Greek mythology, describes a persistently held belief in another person such that the belief becomes a reality. The person believed in, *becomes* the person whom they are perceived to be.

Many managers know of the Pygmalion Effect, in which our expectations not only influence how we see employee performance, but also influence the employee's performance and perception of themselves. This happens because we telegraph our expectations through tiny cues that are often out of our awareness. When people pick up these cues, their behavior tends toward our expectations, and our expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Consider this example. When we meet an accountant and we expect him to be focused and meticulous. Meet a nurse, and we expect her (your initial thoughts were of a woman, right?) to be gentle and kind. Visualize an NCO—a member of our Air Force—and we automatically expect measured discipline and substantial experience. These expectations are powerful in how they influence individual behavior.

As a subordinate, you might know this from personal experience. Perhaps your supervisor expected the best of you, and you delivered, and felt great. Or perhaps you were expected to fail, and did. Let's face it—it's difficult to excel when your supervisor thinks you're a loser.

Did you ever notice that there are some people with whom we naturally feel comfortable? Who think our ideas are great. When they listen to us, we express ourselves clearly and are able to make ideas ring with clarity and insight. This is because, believing we are bright, they see us in this light. And knowing how they feel about us, we work hard to make sure they are satisfied with our answers.

The opposite is also true. There are people with whom we are not comfortable and who we believe do not like us. Naturally, we avoid these people and we do not do our best when we are around them. With these people we are hesitant and much less articulate. We are often less likely to try hard to get them to understand our point of view. In the end, we are victims of a label that has been placed on us by another.

Sadly, research points out that if subordinates aren't doing well in their jobs, the problem could be the boss. In fact, it's the manager's expectation that determines the performance of the employees,



Master Sgt. David Halvorson

since employees respond directly to those expectations. If the expectations are low, performance is likely to be poor. If expectations are high, performance is likely to be good.

The good news is that, as managers, each of us can create the positive results of the Pygmalion Effect with our employees, improving productivity and morale in the process. Success is certainly dependent on many enabling factors and variables, by raising our expectations for our subordinates and coworkers, we then support them, letting them *know* that we believe in them. Everyone can benefit from increased mission readiness, as well as higher morale and productivity.

So why not give this proven philosophy a spin in your work center. It's easy, it works wonders, and it's free! Over time, the practice will develop your Airmen in ways you could never imagine!

Still have doubts? Give me a call and we'll meet for coffee to discuss the topic in detail—come on, what are you waiting for? Contact me at 846-6636 or david.halvorson@kirtland.af.mil.



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Make memories this summer, not mishaps

BY MICHAEL "TREE" KIESTER
377th Air Base Wing Safety Office

So here we sit on the precipice of another summer. A summer that will hold great adventures for those of us in our "youth." A summer that will remind us of great adventures during our youth, and for some of us a feeling of contentment on realizing we made through our youth, considering what we did during our summers.

The Air Force Safety Center has released an epidemiology study. An epidemiology study is an in-depth look at something to collect data to provide answers about how and why an event occurred. Sometimes the epidemiologists look at communicable diseases, but the epidemiologists at the Safety Center looked at the mishaps and injuries of Air Force civilians and active duty members.

The hope of this study is to give Air

Force personnel the information needed to actively target areas that hold the majority of our mishaps and injuries. Luckily, but unfortunately, for us we have a target rich environment.

After diving into the study I can tell you not to play basketball and don't drive a car, ever again. Cars, trucks, motorcycles and all terrain vehicles are responsible for the largest group of Air Force mishaps. Basketball is the sport that holds the title of being the leading cause of recreational sports related injuries.

The largest percentage of these accidents that occur this year will happen before Labor Day. Thus, the Air Force has instituted the 101 Critical Days of Summer program as most of you know.

So, here is the down and dirty: Think before you drink, or drive or water ski or play basketball or whatever it is you choose to do for fun this summer. Take

the time to size up what you want to do and then think what you can do to mitigate the risks.

For example: water skiing. So you want to be slung around the surface of the water at high speed behind a watercraft which has the equipment to make you into a human chicken of the sea, while trying to dodge preteens equipped with 160 horsepower one person torpedoes.

Hey, if that is what you want, go for it, but think about it. Don't consume alcoholic beverages. Don't ski in a busy area. Don't ski in shallow water and always wear a personal flotation device. The same with base jumping. Make sure your equipment is good, the object you are jumping from is not going to follow you down, and try and miss the pointy rocks when your chute doesn't open.

Have a good summer, make memories and not mishaps.

FORUM

kirtlandcc.forum@kirtland.af.mil, 846-4240

Old Forums?

I'm trying to find out if previous letters to the commander's forum are on line somewhere so I don't have to keep bugging people if my questions have been asked and answered. If you could give me a call back, I'd appreciate it.

We're glad you asked. Past editions of the *Nucleus* are online at www.kirtland.af.mil, for one month, or you can call the Nucleus office at 846-4235. We answer every "Forum" input we receive.

Nearly all "Forum" responses are published, but some inquiries through the "Forum" are sufficiently private that we do our utmost to keep them that way.

Thanks to folks at Youth Center

I would like to commend and give thanks to the folks at the Youth Center. My daughter and I have been using this facility for several years, and the staff has always been very professional and kind.

Recently, I filled out my daughter's summer camp paperwork incorrectly. I thought that I had ensured a spot in daycare for my daughter but I hadn't.

The staff at the Youth Center worked with me to correct the situation, even though I had made the mistake.

My daughter is now enrolled in summer camp and she and I are both incredibly happy.

The folks at the center are always very understanding and courteous and more than happy to help in any way they can. You have a great team there and a great facility.

My daughter and I feel very fortunate to be able to use the Youth Center.

We appreciate your kind comments about the good people at our Youth Center.

Long lines

I was calling to provide feedback. I come in the Wyoming Gate at about 5:30 a.m. and over the past week or so it has been horrendous getting in the gate. Cars are backed up all the way to Zuni, and it's taking 15-20 minutes to even get into the base.



COL. HENRY L. ANDREWS, JR.
377th Air Base Wing commander

It appears that it's really slowed down, and it causes problems for those of us who have to be to work that early.

Our 377th Security Forces Squadron installation entry controllers process several thousand vehicles a day onto Kirtland AFB. In most cases, and especially when the drivers are prepared with the proper identification, the time required to obtain base entry is minimal. However, delays do occur during our peak traffic hours. Our security forces team does its best to speed the process, while maintaining proper security.

More people needed at MVD

I was wondering why there is only one person working behind the desk at the Motor Vehicle Division desk during the lunch hour. I just went over there at noon for my lunch hour at work. I was unable to get assistance because there was only one person there, and there should be more.

The customer ahead of me transferred his Hawaii registration to New Mexico registration, which takes a lot of time, and also he required a New Mexico driver's license.

I only went there to get a New Mexico driver's license, and I left without one because I don't have

enough time for my lunch hour. I work until 5 p.m. and the MVD office closes at 4 p.m.

There should be more than one person during the noon hour.

The Motor Vehicle Division tries to have at least two people assisting customers at all times. The MVD staff also takes their lunch the hour before or after the peak lunch period of 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., when business slows down.

On the day you visited the MVD, one of the staff members had to take half the day off to take care of personal business. The remaining staff started to take their lunch at 12:45 p.m., when it seemed business had slowed down, leaving one MVD clerk to assist customers.

While we do our best to meet the needs of our customers, we certainly got caught short on the day you visited.

One helpful hint for everyone: the first and last day of every month and Fridays are always extra busy.

New machine gives less golf balls

I have taken up the sport of golf and really enjoy the facilities the Air Force supplies for us. A couple of months ago a new range ball dispenser was installed at the course and, I thought this would be a good thing. Apparently I was wrong.

The quantity of the balls dispensed by the new machine was reduced by 20 percent.

I asked one of my buddies who works at the course why there was such a reduction and he said, "That's just how it's adjusted."

If you are a member of the club you receive 30 FULL buckets a month. Would it really hurt management to adjust the machine to fill the buckets?

I understand the difficulty of maintaining a golf course especially in the desert, but there have been no improvements.

Lots of golfers will appreciate you bringing this up. When we bought the new range ball dispenser, we neglected to consider adjusting the price of the machine's tokens. Our old machine dispensed 33 range balls for \$1.50. Our new machine is able to dispense 22 range balls for

that one token. To make the purchase of range balls equitable, we've lowered the price of a token to \$1.

Kudos to Airman

This is regarding the base gate guards: I drove through there about 5:30 p.m. yesterday and I was in a bad mood, and Airman Jacob cheered me up and made me happy. You can have a bad day or be upset, but the guards at the gate have to have a 24-hour good attitude, but Airman Jacob acted very professionally, very courteously and she joked and calmed me down and made me feel happy. She explained the principle of the base commander's policy as to why you have to have insurance. To me, she is really professional, and she looked sharp.

Thank you very much for taking the time to recognize one of our outstanding security forces members. The Airman who assisted you is Senior Airman Lisa Jacob. She has been presented a letter of appreciation in recognition of her outstanding performance and for exemplifying the Air Force Core Value of "Excellence in All We Do." Our security forces members do their best every day to support you and the TEAM KIRTLAND mission.

Forum

We want your suggestions and comments concerning Kirtland AFB.

However, may we also suggest giving base agencies or the chain of command the chance to resolve your concern before calling Forum.

If you decide the Forum is the right answer, we don't print callers' names.

Customer service

Chapel, 846-5691
CE Help Desk, 846-8222
Commissary, 846-9586
Computer help, 846-5926
Energy wasting, 846-4633
Exchange Service, 266-9887
Family Services, 846-0741
Finance, 846-8045, 846-6639
Law Enforcement, 846-7926
Legal Services, 846-4217
Medical Clinic, 846-3406
Services Squadron, 846-1828

Write: 377 ABW/CC Forum
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